CHARTIS

Physical Environment: Common Findings & Causes

On the Radar webinar series



The webinar will start at the top of the hour.

MONTHLY INSIGHTS

Webinar schedule & topics

THE 3RD THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH:

10AM Pacific, 1PM Eastern

TODAY

November 19, 2026

DECEMBER

Break until January

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Past webinars available for streaming

CHARTIS.COM

CHARTIS Greeley
A CHARTIS COMPANY

On the Radar

Chartis and Greeley explore practical and future-focused topics in quality, regulatory & medical staff.





UPCOMING WEBINAR

Seconds to contaminate, years to recover

Apr 09, 2026

This session will examine regulatory standards governing high-level disinfection and sterilization, with emphasis on how surveyors interpret and apply those requirements in acute and procedural settings.

> REGISTER NOW

Navigating the Zoom interface

Handouts:

Check the chat function for copies of the slides for note taking and any other handouts.

Questions and comments:

Please participate in the discussion by asking question through the Q&A function during the webinar.

There will also be a survey you will receive immediately after the webinar that will give you an opportunity to ask additional questions or make comments.

Any questions not answered during the webinar will be addressed in a follow-up email or posting.



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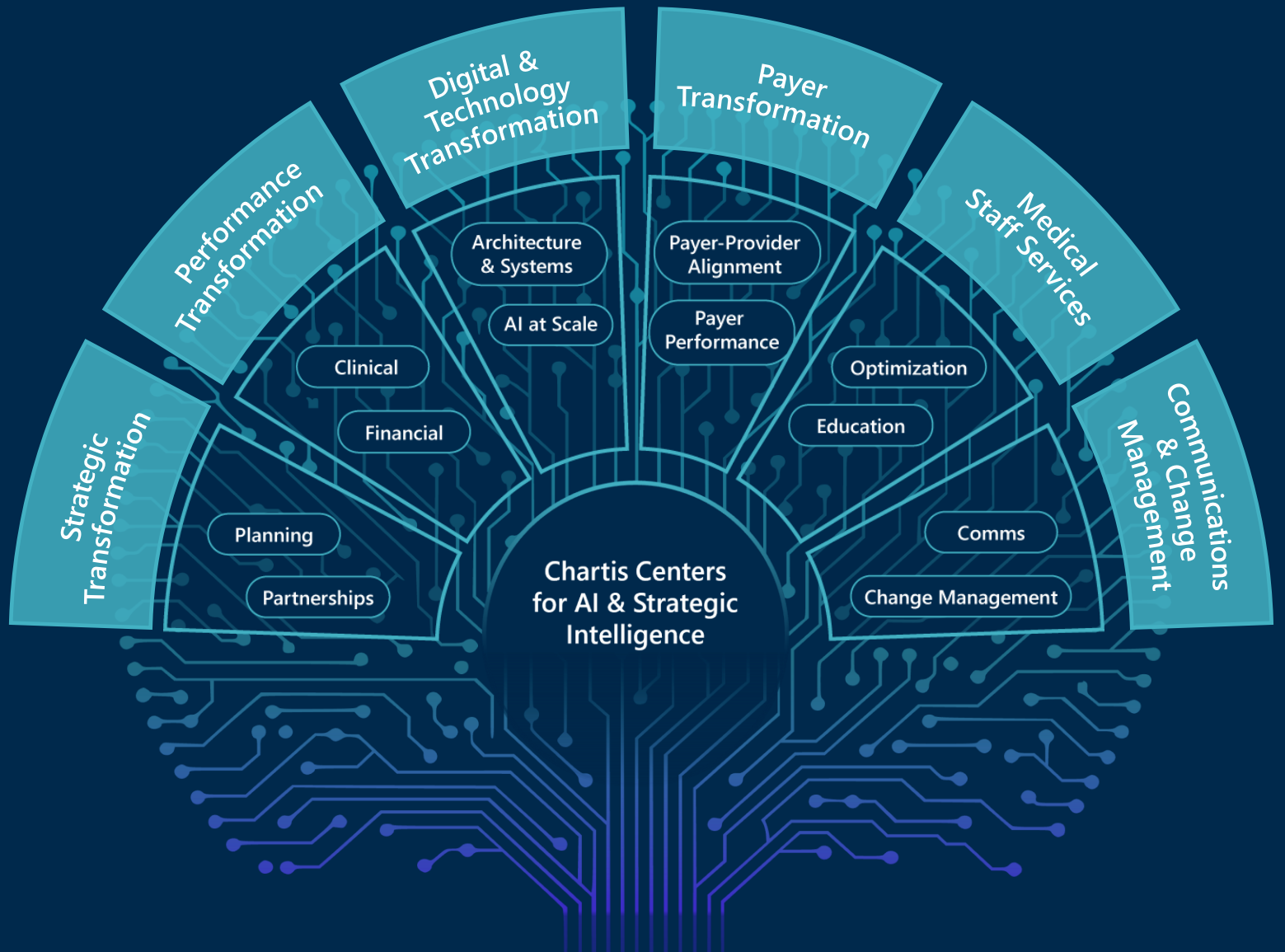
Chartis is uniquely built to *deliver the last mile.*

Our **integrated lines of business** work alongside the Chartis Centers for AI & Strategic Intelligence to deliver against the last mile necessary to **transform healthcare delivery.**

Connected capabilities.
Real healthcare transformation.



High Reliability Care

UNPARALLELED BREADTH AND DEPTH

Our clients are all striving toward the same goal of providing safe, high-quality care—something that's becoming even more important with the many distractions and disruptions in healthcare today. We help clients achieve their organizational reliability, quality, and safety goals, leading to results in areas that matter most—improved care outcomes, staff engagement, operational stability, and total cost of care, enhanced reputation, and better patient experience.

High Reliability Organization (HRO)

- High reliability organizational design and infrastructure
- Quality, Value, and Performance Improvement
- Quality ratings and rankings optimization
- Patient safety / harm reduction / safety and reliability culture
- Adverse event response and remediation / RCA
- High fidelity measurement / Clinical Documentation Integrity (CDI)
- Care facilitation

Clinical Compliance, Regulatory, and Physical Environment Solutions

- Adverse event response
- Adverse action regulatory response and remediation
- Accrediting body readiness assessment
- Regulatory readiness rehearsal / mock surveys
- Life safety and environment of care assessment
- Policy simplification
- Infection prevention program

Bylaws, Rules and Regulations, and Peer Review

- Bylaws and rules and regulations assessment and redesign
- Peer review assessment and redesign
- Medical staff / medical director structure and governance
- Credentialing, OPPE

External Peer Review

- Physician/advanced practice professional external peer review
- Focused Professional Practice Evaluation (FPPE)
- Ongoing case review in support of OPPE/FPPE
- Medical necessity reviews
- Patient safety/carequality case reviews

MEMBERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION SERVICES

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Today's *discussion*

We will review common physical environment findings, their potential causes, and what you can do about them.



Eamonn Wheelock
MPH, MA, CHEP, CHSP
Senior Consultant, PES



Lori Dinney
MS, CHSP, PE
Senior Consultant, PES

"Keeping up with change, planning for tomorrow

Today's *agenda*

Common Findings

Causes

Corrections

Questions should be posted in the webinar interface throughout the presentation.
We will respond to any unanswered questions in writing following the webinar.

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POLL QUESTION:

What type of facility are you in?

- Hospital
- ASC
- Outpatient/Ambulatory
- LTC
- Other

POLL QUESTION:

Who is your AO?

- The Joint Commission
- DNV
- CIHQ
- ACHC
- Other

POLL QUESTION:

What is your role?

- Facility Leadership
- Support Services Leadership
- Safety Officer
- Regulatory Leadership
- Infection Preventionist
- Other

POLL QUESTION:

What is your title?

- Supervisor/Coordinator
- Manager
- Officer
- Vice President
- Other

Physical Environment: Common Findings & Causes

01

Common Findings

As reported by
The Joint Commission,
DNV, CIHQ, and ACHC

Common Findings Across Accrediting Organizations

We will see some different labels and citations dependent on the AO, but trends exist amongst the findings

We Have Seen These Before

- Revised standards, and those that have been in place for years, are not showing us a lot of different findings
- New year- same stuff

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CHAT QUESTION:

Before we start, what trends or common findings do you think you will see?

The Joint Commission

Utility System Control Labels	Spare/Energized breakers labeled incorrectly; Missing or inaccurate panel schedules/labels; Unlabeled utility shut-off valves
Non-High Risk Utility System Test	Blocked or obstructed electrical panels and equipment; Open or uncovered electrical junction boxes; Unlocked or accessible electrical panels
NFPA Auto Extinguishment	Obstructed or blocked fire extinguishers and sprinklers; Ceiling membrane gaps and unsealed penetrations; Improper installation or maintenance of fire suppression equipment
Dedicated Sprinkler Piping	Sprinkler piping used to support other items
Fire Barrier Penetration Seal	Unsealed or improperly sealed penetrations; Use of non-compliant materials
Fire Rated Door Requirements	Failure of fire doors to latch or close properly; Improper door conditions affecting fire ratings; Doors propped or wedged open
Sprinkler Maintenance	Missing or improperly installed escutcheon plates; Accumulation of dust, dirt, or debris on sprinklers; Corrosion, paint or ice on sprinklers
Ceiling Membrane Integrity	Ceiling membrane penetrations and gaps
Critical Pressure Relationship	Improper pressure relationships in critical areas; Temperature and humidity non-compliance; Lack of documentation and corrective action
Cylinder Handling Policy	Unsecured or improperly secured gas cylinders; Improper labeling and segregation of cylinders; Non-compliance with storage environment requirements

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Improper Air Pressure Relationships	Non-compliant air pressure relationships in designated areas such as operating rooms, sterile supply rooms, isolation rooms, etc.
Annual Eyewash Testing and Maintenance	Non-compliance with the testing requirements and maintenance in the current ANSI Z358.1 standard
Missing Eyewash	Not having an approved eyewash station where required to meet the hazards/staff activities in an area
Non-Compliant Use of RPT's	"Power Strips" not mounted, daisy-chained, overloaded, non-labeled/listed, etc.
Penetrations of Fire/Smoke Barriers	Unsealed/Improperly sealed penetrations or gaps
Loaded Fire Sprinklers	Dust, debris, paint, corrosion, etc.
Pharmaceutical Waste Not Identified as Required	Unlabeled bins, no dates, no inventory
Cooking Equipment Not Tethered	
Sprinkler Piping Supporting Non-System Components	Low voltage cables, HVAC ducts, etc.
No Annual Training for Bulk Oxygen System	

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CIHQ

Provision of Facilities	Water management program incomplete; Eyewash station locations and inspections
Testing of Emergency Power Systems	Weekly inspections; Documentation incomplete
Compliance to the Life Safety Code	Penetrations; Sprinkler piping supporting other items; Movable kitchen equipment not having a mechanism in place to ensure proper placement after being moved; Missing tethers on movable kitchen equipment with gas lines; Latching of corridor doors; latching of fire doors
Inspection and Testing of Life Safety Systems	Missing documentation!
Compliance to the NFPA Health Care Facilities Code	Risk assessments; LIM testing; Operating room fire exiting drills; Improper or missing signage where compressed gas cylinders are stored; Unable to access emergency O2 supply connection
Business Occupancies	Missing fire drills; Testing records not available in leased buildings; Improper cylinder storage; Air pressure relationships
Temporary Life Safety Assessments	Not being performed; Not being implemented
Life Safety Drawings	Not in a readable format (11x17 minimum); Not current; Not identifying suite boundaries and hazardous areas

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ACHC

Fire Alarm System: Installation and Maintenance	Smoke detectors within 36" of return/supply diffuser; Fire alarm pull stations blocked
Utility Systems	Open electrical junction boxes; RPTs improperly used/located; Electrical outlet testing in patient care areas
Ventilation, Light, and Temperature Controls	Temperature and humidity readings; Improper pressure relationships
Ceilings	Gaps in membrane; Missing tiles
Fire Rated Door Assemblies	Improper doors; Doors not positively latching; Missing or unreadable labels; "Rated doors" on LS drawings not in a fire-rated assembly
Water-Based Fire Suppression System	Listed as fully-sprinklered when not; Loaded sprinklers; Missing spare sprinklers by types installed; Non-sprinkler components on sprinkler piping; Storage too close to sprinkler
Fire Alarm System: Testing	Smoke detector location; Missing notification and annunciation devices; System performance and reliability; Testing, inspection, and documentation; Inaccurate/missing inventories
Fire Rated Barriers	Unsealed penetrations; Missing drywall sections; Scab patching
Eyewash Stations and Emergency Showers	Missing eyewash stations; Bottles in lieu of a station; Missing testing and inspection documentation
Water-Based Fire Suppression System: Testing	Missing documentation
Kitchen Hood Suppression	Missing tethers; Missing approved method to ensure the appliance is returned to an approved designated location

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CHAT QUESTION:

Were there any surprises?
If so, what were they?

Four Accrediting Organizations - *Many Trends*

- Documentation problems
- Stuff that isn't lounging on sprinklers or sprinkler piping
- Loaded sprinklers
- Unsealed penetrations in walls and ceilings
- Power strips seems to be a never-ending fight
- Who hasn't found an open J-Box?
- Air pressure relationships
- Eyewash stations
- Kitchen equipment not tethered

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Causes

Documentation

Lack of an auditing program, not reviewing documentation from vendors, not scheduling vendors in time to complete testing

Sprinkler Systems

No above ceiling program/inspection process, no set frequency to clean sprinklers

Power Strips

Nobody "owns" the process, no restrictions on who can order them, no understanding of what is allowed and why

Barrier/Ceiling Maintenance

No above ceiling program/inspection process, lack of focused auditing

Open Electrical Junction Boxes

No above ceiling program/inspection process, not treating mechanical spaces the same as everywhere else

Air Pressure Relationships

Design, commissioning, change of use of a room, "tweaking" the system

Eyewash Stations

Lack of understanding of who owns what, annual vs. weekly checks, lack of a risk assessment process

Kitchen Equipment

Lack of understanding of the requirements

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Remedies | *Ways to work through these problems*

Documentation

Ensure you have an auditing program-conduct your own document review sessions; Review any documentation you get from vendors and ensure that you are scheduling vendors in time to complete testing within correct timeframes

Sprinkler Systems

Conduct focused above ceiling inspections and remove non sprinkler components from the sprinkler system; Conduct focused assessments of sprinklers, at a set frequency, to clean them and move items that have crept too close

Power Strips

Assign an owner who can approve the purchase of RPTs, restrict the ability to purchase to approved types, assign an owner for installation, and conduct focused assessments

Barrier/Ceiling Maintenance

Conduct focused above ceiling barrier, and ceiling inspections to identify and correct deficiencies

Open Electrical Junction Boxes

Conduct focused above ceiling inspections to identify and correct; Treat the mechanical rooms the same as everywhere else

Air Pressure Relationships

Conduct focused assessments and make adjustments as necessary

Eyewash Stations

Ensure your policy is correct and enforce it through focused audits for inspection compliance; Conduct risk assessments for placement

Kitchen Equipment

Conduct focused assessments and correct as necessary

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Questions/Concerns?

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Thank *you*

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